

PECK EXPLAINS PASSENGER RATE

Salt Lake Route Officials Answer Letter by S. H. Babcock.

GO INTO FULL DETAILS

SHOW WHY FARE TO LOS ANGELES IS NOW REASONABLE.

S. H. Babcock, traffic manager for the Salt Lake City Commercial club's traffic bureau, has received a very interesting answer from General Traffic Manager Fred A. Wann of the Salt Lake Route to the letter written March 25 by Mr. Babcock on the question of reduced passenger fares between this city and Los Angeles. The letter from Mr. Wann is brief, but he encloses with it a letter to him from General Passenger Agent T. C. Peck, which covers the situation very thoroughly and quite in detail. The Babcock letter was referred to Mr. Peck by Mr. Wann, and the Peck letter was addressed to the general traffic manager consequently. In his short letter, however, Mr.

Wann makes a few personal comments. He says: "In order to make a railroad a success it must be fair to the public and at the same time an officer of the railway must be fair to the interests he represents, and you, as representing the people, can do much to create a friendly feeling between the railroad and its patrons. This we all recognize. The local passenger rates of this company vary from 3 to 6 cents per mile, yet our average fare on our local traffic for the past three years has averaged less than 2 1/2 cents per mile per passenger."

Mr. Wann quotes some figures from the report of the interstate commerce commission for the year ending June 30, 1908, which show that the total mileage of 794 railroads reporting to the commission for the year was 227,678.06 miles, and that the average expense of operating, maintaining, etc., including maintenance of way and equipment, transportation expenses, general expenses, traffic expenses and taxes, was \$7.87.32 per mile, and he adds that his company has not earned \$7,000 per mile since its line was built. He says: "I think you must agree with me that no traffic man could see his way clear to make the startling reduction in passenger fares that you suggest. We are willing to meet any reasonable demands made upon us, and it will always be our aim to be fair to our patrons. I presume you are aware that the eastern trunk lines earn two and three times the amount per mile that this company does." And he gives figures to confirm his statement. Mr. Peck's letter to Mr. Wann, after calling attention to Mr. Babcock's letter, states that while Mr. Babcock

called attention to several individual passenger rates which are less per mile than the fares of the Salt Lake Route from this city to Los Angeles, that Mr. Babcock failed to consider certain factors in making the comparison. He says:

"In order to make a fair comparison as to Mr. Babcock's proposition an examination should be made into the population, relative wealth and character of the respective districts with regard to the productiveness of the soil, mines, factories, etc. And, most important of all, we should look into the volume of passenger traffic in each district as indicated by passenger train earnings and the relative reduced excursion fares and reduced one-way round-trip fares authorized, respectively, as indicated by the rate per passenger per mile."

Here Mr. Peck quotes figures covering the Northern Pacific and Great Northern of exclusive passenger revenue, revenue per passenger per mile on various divisions, total revenue of passenger trains, with miscellaneous earnings and passenger earnings per train per mile. These figures were taken, he said, for a period of time when business was good everywhere and there were no local conditions in either district to restrict or increase the normal passenger traffic. From these statistics Mr. Peck pointed out the following showings, as follows:

Peck's Deductions.

"First—We do about 54 per cent the amount of passenger business done by the Great Northern, and about 18 per cent of that done by the Northern Pacific, and about 14 per cent of that done

by the two lines in the territory outlined in the table. The passenger train earnings per mile of the two roads is from 57.5 per cent to 73.3 per cent larger than ours. In other words, the volume of passenger traffic is immensely larger between Butte and the Pacific coast and intermediate points than between Salt Lake City and the Pacific coast and intermediate points.

"Second—We authorize a great many more special, excursion and reduced round trip and one-way fares than are authorized by the Northern Pacific and Great Northern, as our rate per mile per passenger is invariably less. In other words, we are much more liberal than those lines in authorizing the character of fares that will induce people to travel to Salt Lake City, and in authorizing such fares as will stimulate travel between Utah and the Pacific coast, which latter purpose is one of the results aimed at by Mr. Babcock's proposition.

"Third—At present we are earning but approximately 2 cents per mile per passenger, and our passenger trains are operated at the very lowest possible margin of profit.

"Fourth—Our rate, Salt Lake to Los Angeles, is relatively lower than the rates of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific, cited by Mr. Babcock, everything taken into consideration."

Answer to Babcock.

Mr. Peck then takes up directly the proposition of a flat reduction in rates made by S. H. Babcock, and answers his comparisons made between the Salt Lake Route's fares and those of the

roads operating between Butte and the Pacific coast. He says: "The character of the territory between Butte and the Pacific coast is much better than that between Salt Lake City and the Pacific coast, so far as present productiveness and possibilities are concerned. There is some mountainous country along the Great Northern and Northern Pacific, but by far the greater portion of their territory is rich agricultural land and splendid grazing land.

"Further, the government is spending millions of dollars in irrigation projects along both the Great Northern and Northern Pacific, which will have the effect of turning many, at present, unsettled or sparsely settled tracts of land into rich farming communities.

"With the exception of about seventy-five miles in southern California, all the territory traversed by our line between Salt Lake and the Pacific coast is a dry, barren country, cut by rough, bleak mountain ranges and, with the exception of a modest area in Utah and a few small oases further west, is, up to the present time, absolutely unproductive from an agricultural or horticultural standpoint.

"The population is probably less per square mile than anywhere else in the United States. The wealth produced by the territory along our line is very small when compared with that produced by Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon.

Reduced Special Rates.

"I desire to state that we have, at present, on sale in Utah a \$90 scrip book in connection with which our rate from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles will be \$19.55 as soon as our tariff, which is now in the hands of the printer, is filed with the interstate commerce commission.

"On thirty-nine days this summer we will have a reduced round trip fare of \$30 from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles. On 103 days this summer we will have a reduced round trip fare of \$40 from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles; on Aug. 4 to 9, inclusive, we will have a reduced round trip fare of \$50 from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City.

"The above are merely examples given to show that we have in mind the desirability of frequent travel between Utah and the coast. We have done, and are doing, everything we consistently can to promote such travel with its resulting interchange of ideas, and as stated by Mr. Babcock, closer commercial and social relations.

"As far as passenger traffic is concerned, I believe the interests of Utah will be best served by maintaining, first, superior and efficient train service into and through that state; and, second, authorizing at the proper intervals,

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Fat, or even fattish, women readers who want to be in the mode this year must understand that the demand is for lines, not curves, and govern themselves accordingly.

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reduced round trip fares which will be an incentive to travel."

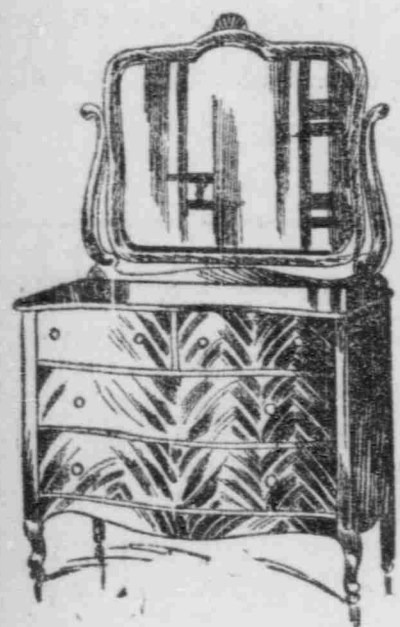
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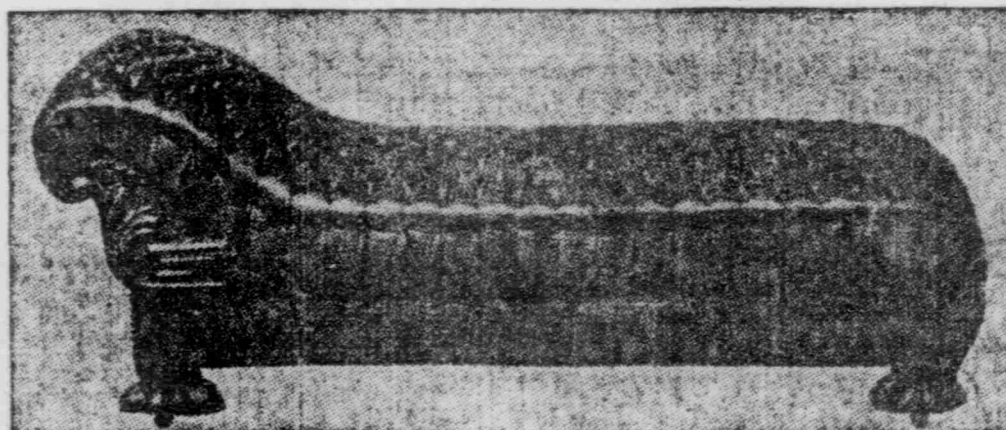
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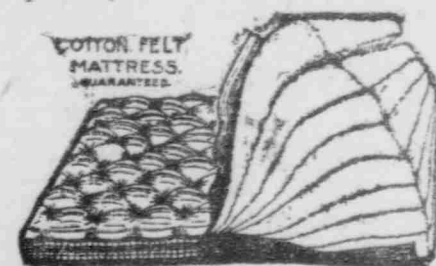
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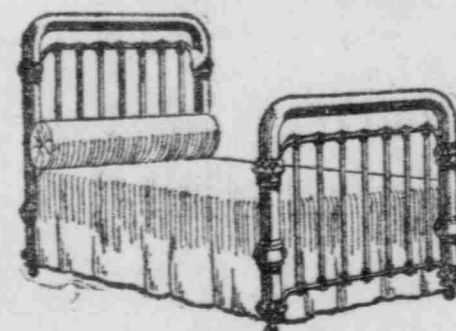
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